# 24th General Assembly of the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy convened in Rome

On 26-27 June 2017, the 24th General Assembly of the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy held its working sessions in Rome, Italy. With the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, Bishop Antony of Bogorodsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administration for Institutions Abroad, took part in this international forum.

In the evening of June 25, the delegates of the Assembly visited the Monastery of St Nilus in Grottaferrata, where they were greeted by Msgr. Marcello Semeraro, Bishop of Albano, and representatives of the city authorities. The guests visited the churches and the library of one of the most ancient monasteries in Italy, as well as the headquarters of the Catholic Focolare Movement.

On June 26, the Assembly's opening ceremony took place at the Italian Parliament. Among the speakers were Mr. Sergei Popov, President of the Assembly, a member of the Council of the Federation of the Russian Federation; Ms. Irina Yarovaya, deputy chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, and other officials.

Bishop Antony of Bogorodsk read out a message of greetings from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. In his letter, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church noted that the major challenge facing society today is the deviation from the Gospel truths and God-commanded ideals, unbelief and indifference. That is why, in His Holiness's opinion, Christians, by a word of inspiration and by an example of pious life, are called to help their compatriots to embrace the realm of truth, goodness and justice.

Among those who sent their messages of greetings were also Pope Francis, Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and Patriarch Theodore of Alexandria and All Africa.

In their addresses, the participants in the forum reflected on the topic 'Christian Understanding of Global Crisis and Ways to Overcome It.' The speakers were unanimous in noting the importance of the joint witness by the Orthodox parliamentarians of the plight of persecuted Christians in the Middle East and in emphasizing the necessity to combine efforts in order to protect the natural environment, combat terrorism in any manifestations, and overcome poverty.

At a plenary session, Bishop Viktor of Baryshevka, vicar of the Kiev metropolia, delivered an address on the current situation of the canonical Orthodox Church in Ukraine.

*DECR Communication Service*

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